A I D S TREATMENT N E W S

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Online Fundraising New Ideas:

Fundraising isn't working well today and needs new business models. This writer developed several designs from an innovative approach to ecommerce: online financial accounts that can *reproduce* at their owner's command, creating new accounts that can *inherit* any number of capabilities, and *evolve* in grassroots community use (the idea is confusing at first, only because it is so different from current practice). From this basic idea come potential fundraising models that you never heard of before. In this series of four separate articles we put some of them on the table for public discussion and use. All our work is rights-free. See the next four articles below -- or visit http://www.aidsnews.org/fundr .

Why is fundraising so hard when millions of people want to help, and have plenty of surplus money between them, thousands of times what AIDS and health activism would need? How could we provide better opportunities for giving?

Fundraising campaigns could be elaborate local or global contests or games to raise money for good causes -- displaying financial results instantly, costing almost nothing, and letting donors, teams and individual fundraisers make their mark.

Suppose a major donor anywhere in the world could sponsor tens of thousands (or any number) of copies of a song, video, or any other digital "content" -- letting tens of thousands of people in social networks just click to download free, with no registration ever, instantly paying the artists or a cause by the act of free downloading itself. And each sponsor can deliver a message to the thousands of anonymous end users who download from his or her contribution. We show how independent artists could market globally at no expense if people care about their work -- offering an alternative to corporate monoculture. Or they could donate their digital art to an organization that sells it this way to raise funds.

Here we show the power of this idea, and some unusual business and fundraising models it will make possible.

Statement of Purpose:
AIDS Treatment News reports on experimental and standard treatments, especially those available now. We interview physicians, scientists, other health professionals, and persons with AIDS or HIV; we also collect information from meetings and conferences, medical journals, and computer databases. Long-term survivors have usually tried many different treatments, and found combinations that work for them. *AIDS Treatment News* does not recommend particular therapies, but seeks to increase the options available.

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Watch for treatment and prevention research news late this month, and following.

The "c-word" is coming back due to new research, after a decade of banishment.

Simply adding 'HIV' to your search works pretty well to make any online search AIDS-related.

RSS works better than email for receiving or distributing online news, and AEGIS has suggested that its email users switch.

The most accurate information available provides a reality check in this highly politicized area.

Activism and Online Fundraising: Overview

By John S. James

A Paradox

Funding remains a critical, eternal problem for AIDS and other health activists and organizations. Why is this so, when millions of people in the U.S. alone want to help and have plenty of unused discretionary money between them, thousands of times more than needed for solid AIDS and health activism? The critical bottleneck seems to be the scarcity of graceful, sociable, rewarding, efficient, transparent, and accountable "donation rituals" or occasions. People don't want to just toss money at an invisible need.

This article outlines new ideas for raising money online. The basic strategy is to offer creative occasions and opportunities, with recognition, competition, cooperation, companionship, and other structures and incentives, to people worldwide who already want to help and could do so. Donors will be able to see their money in action, immediately and concretely. At the same time, even

supporters who cannot afford to give any money can make major contributions to the success of these fundraising campaigns, through social networking.

We focus on activism and information more than services, because no private fundraising can replace government commitment and good faith in dealing with an epidemic that has killed tens of millions of people. Government will not support activism or full information, and without them, who knows what governments will do or fail to do? Private funding can help people already well-placed to alert public and expert opinion in time, before mistakes become disasters.

For example, in June 2007 Philadelphia lost $2.4 million in Federal funding of the Ryan White AIDS program, apparently ending all Ryan White funding for translation and interpretive services, nutritional services, home healthcare, day respite care, rehabilitative care, complementary therapies, client advocacy, and buddy/companion services; at least half of the funds for psychosocial services; and smaller reductions for other programs, according to the *Philadelphia Gay News* [1]. Local people were kept in the dark, and the real decisions were made in Washington. If just 1% to 5% of the funding involved had been raised privately to keep the community on top of the problem as it developed, the outcome could well have been different, for Philadelphia and other cities too.

The central issue for donors and policymakers in funding nonprofits and activism is the difficulty of measuring what they really accomplish. So donors have a dilemma: they don't want to waste money, yet they don't want to micromanage either (especially outside their expertise). Business handles this problem by having markets establish prices based on many peoples' decisions. But market dominance has problems, too. It corrupts governments and institutions (in health insurance, see SiCKO), letting corporations use sovereign power to entrench economic distortions, worsen inequality, and create wars for profit.

Another problem for donors is that needs are bottomless, but most people don't want to give everything they have away. So donors create arbitrary limits to protect themselves. Instead, well-designed occasions or rituals could let donors do what they feel like when they feel like it, providing more natural limits.

This series of four short articles outlines a

mixed, business-plus-gift-economy approach to fundraising. For example, donors could buy online prepaid access to donated digital art in huge quantities (or any quantity), give it out free through social networks as they wish, and take any unused money back if they want. Yet the end users whose decisions validate this kind of market do not need to have any money at all. And they are freed from payment-processing expenses and hassles as well, allowing low prices online. Our approach, which we believe is new in ecommerce, offers some of the advantages of a market, without the exclusion and inequity. It could open doors to wider public participation across class barriers.

This writer designed and wrote computer software for many years before the AIDS epidemic; we used that experience to look for ways to support *AIDS Treatment News* online without denying it to people who cannot pay. We found much more than we were looking for, and published it rights-free for anyone to use in open-source, educational, nonprofit, or commercial projects (see http://www.smart-accounts.org). We show that both the software development and its introduction into popular use could prove unexpectedly easy.

This is the first article in our fundraising series of four -- each intended to be readable alone. The "fundathon" proposal, next, is easiest to understand; it suggests designing fundraising campaigns as massively multiplayer online contests or games, open to anyone in the world [2]. The third article, on selling digital art, may be the most important for fundraising [3].

Our final article in this series, on a new design for ecommerce, may be most important ultimately. But it can be hard to grasp the unfamiliar idea of online financial accounts that can reproduce at their owner's command, inherit any number of capabilities from ancestor accounts, and evolve on their own toward being more useful and attractive to people [4].

References

1. Region to Lose $2.4M in AIDS Funding, by Timothy Cwiek, *Philadelphia Gay News*, June 22-28, 2007, http://www.epgn.com/062207/1AIDScuts062207.htm

2. "Fundathon": Toward Massively Multiplayer Online Fundraising Games, *AIDS Treatment News* #422.

3. Selling Digital Art in Bulk through Prepaid

URLs, *AIDS Treatment News* #422.

4. Financial Accounts That Can Reproduce, Inherit, and Evolve, http://www.aidsnews.org/2007/07/fundr-reproduce.html

"Fundathon": Toward Massively Multiplayer Online Fundraising Games

By John S. James

The Need

Walkathons, bikeathons, concerts, and similar events have a large overhead, and often return disappointingly little money to the cause (there are important exceptions). Getting hundreds of people to walk two miles or bike two hundred may be good for exercise and for networking, but the headline physical activity such as walking or pedaling does not by itself fight AIDS. The real purpose of these events is to provide opportunities to ask people for money -- a good thing, but at a heavy cost in extraneous effort. We need alternatives.

A fundraising contest could combine the social activity with the ultimate cause, letting people do both in the same action. For example, teams of volunteer or professional fundraisers could compete with each other to raise the most money for a cause within a given interval -- such as a day, a week, or a month. Online donations will show up instantly on a dashboard (a public Web page showing results in colorful multimedia displays, once the bankcard, etc. has been successfully charged), letting donors and everyone else see the action right away. Donors might click to fund special projects if they want to, each described on the fundraising site. And their money will be available for use immediately. Using the dashboard to most effectively support emergency relief could become a recognized skill.

Two or more competing teams might raise money for the same cause -- or for different causes, including competitions between ideological opponents or competitors in the same game.

Donor Recognition

Donors can get recognition for their gift if they wish, by leaving their name or any acceptable short message on the same multimedia page that shows current result (which team is ahead, etc.) Larger donations will receive more prominent messages -- allowing bidding wars between donors, which could greatly increase the money raised. Donors could get a password to change or delete their message later if they wish.

In a world of relentless competition for attention, giving a lot of money to a good cause through such a contest will be one quick way to get it. And these Web pages might be publicly archived after the contest and saved online indefinitely, linked to the histories of relevant movements, organizations, and people -- a modern, digital totem pole.

Recognition works in fundraising; note donors' names on multimillion-dollar buildings. The recognition here has the advantage of being immediate, hopefully eternal (outlasting a physical building at least), flexible (donors can provide messages and multimedia, not just their names), and always changeable by the donor or whoever has his or her password. And there is digital precedent -- for example, the university student who sold a million pixels at $1 each, to be displayed with links for at least five years at http://www.milliondollarhomepage.com

Besides the competition between teams, and sometimes bidding wars between donors, individual fundraisers themselves could compete for recognition and prizes for raising a lot of money. When making a contribution, donors could credit whichever fundraiser or team they wanted to (usually the one that brought them into the contest).

Probably the best strategy for teams to win these fundraising games will be to organize major donors in advance. The winning play will start before the game officially begins.

Walkathons, etc. work because they give a different, lighter kind of occasion to discuss donations -- separate from the grim realities in the background (which still provide the central motivation). A fundraising contest has the same advantage. But instead of a walk, the main activity is to find, meet with, and mobilize potential donors, especially big donors, in competition with other fundraisers and teams.

Accountability

Instant publication of all online donation amounts will improve transparency and accountability. Donors could direct their funds into subprojects or even specific purchases of their choice. Eventually, software could publicly track the actual use of every donation.

The cost of the computer processing will be trivial (except for the standard bank-card or PayPal fees), so people will expect (and be able

to confirm) that almost all of their money goes to the purpose for which it was given. Campaigns by new or less-known organizations could be audited and certified in various ways to assure trust. Major donors can and will insist on accountability.

Summary

This contest structure will bring a host of motivations and social occasions into play. Fundraising usually works best as a socially meaningful process, instead of just asking people to write checks. But while most fundraising events have substantial overhead to bring the people together, a fundathon could have almost none.

One Web site could support many separate fundathons, for many different causes. Once such a site is available, creating the technology for a new fundathon will be easy, much like starting a blog. If you know of any existing site that allows users to set up their own fundraising contests, please let us know.

Massively multiplayer online games and other activities (such as World of Warcraft, EverQuest, or Second Life) have created an industry with experience in what does or does not work in this format. The cash value in real money generated by business within some currently existing online games is greater than the entire national income of many countries. Could this experience help improve or even revolutionize support for activist and charitable organizations? We see no reason why not.

Selling Digital Art in Bulk through Prepaid URLs

By John S. James

Summary: Suppose a major donor anywhere in the world could sponsor tens of thousands (or any number) of copies of a song, video, or any other digital "content" -- letting tens of thousands of people in social networks just click to download free, with no registration ever, instantly paying the artists or a cause by the act of free downloading itself. And each sponsor can deliver a message to the thousands of anonymous end users who download from his or her contribution. We show how independent artists could market globally at no expense if people care about their work -- offering an alternative to corporate monoculture.

* * *

Here is a way to allow anyone to buy as much or as little prepaid access as they want, to online music, videos, or other art or information -- and share their access free

through social networks of their choice, or publicly with anyone interested. End users will just click to download free -- instantly paying the artists by the act of free downloading itself. Most users will not need to spend any money, have any account, register, sign up, log in, or learn special instructions, ever -- yet their free downloads will automatically transfer funds among other parties. And anyone who liked a song or other art, the artists, or the cause raising money with the song, could pay whatever they wanted to sponsor the work, to their own social networks or to public groups of their choice.

Combining ecommerce with elements of a gift economy, instead of demanding that everyone pays, allows arbitrarily low prices per download (or streaming, Web visit, or other access) online. A song might be priced at 50 cents, five cents, or even less than a penny -- whatever works best in the situation. (The price could also be high.)

Donations Charge Up URLs with Prepaid Copies for Free Downloads

For example, a donor might contribute $50 to buy 500 downloads of a song or other art, priced at 25 cents each if sold individually but discounted to 10 cents each in large quantities. The donor will receive a new, unique URL (Web address) that knows it has 500 copies of the uploaded file to distribute. This short, simple URL (usually about half a line of text, with the donor allowed to make up part of the name -- see [1] for a likely format) can give up to 500 people free, authorized download or other access to art or information that would otherwise cost them money.

The donor can email the charged-up URL to friends likely to be interested in the art or the cause -- and let them know that they can share it with their friends, post it on blogs, etc. Blogs are likely to welcome such comments if relevant, since they will encourage traffic by giving visitors free access to art or other online content that would otherwise cost money, with no need to watch an ad. Web sites could specialize in free access to a particular genre -- including art that is usually free to the end user, but does insist on being paid for by somebody, somewhere in the world, in order to support the artist.

When empty, the URL will require payment before releasing more free downloads. But anyone who ever receives a copy of that URL can pay it for additional downloads -- clicking to select a payment page instead of a free download (whether or not the URL was empty at the time). This new payment will instantly

recharge all copies of that URL throughout the world (trivially, since all the copies are identical and all reach the same server). Therefore multiple copies of the URL could circulate through social networks indefinitely, being recharged as needed, for as long as people are interested in the art it sells or the cause it benefits.

Meanwhile, other donors can buy new URLs that sell the same art for the same cause -- and start multiple copies of them circulating in other social networks as well. These swarms of copies of different but closely related URLs will continue to pay the artist or the cause as they travel -- until most people have lost interest in that art, or have already downloaded a copy if they want one. Successful fundraising campaigns might continue to raise money for the cause, years after organized efforts had ended; funds could keep showing up in a PayPal account, or be sent periodically by check. (These URLs are actually smart financial accounts, which can decide on their own to mail paper checks or otherwise make payments, deciding when, to whom, and for how much, with no human attention required -- according to instructions the account owner created, approved, or accepted in advance.) Alternatively, the organizers could end the campaign, by making all its URLs totally free and unable to accept any more money.

If you happen to hear a song or find other art you like (or like the cause it is supporting), you will be able to call or click to pay a trusted party for any number of prepaid free downloads. Then you can either give them to a suggested group, or request your own URL to share your prepaid copies with anybody. Either way you can include a message with your gift if you wish (see below). This large-scale, meaningful way to donate is unlike any today

Donors can be in rich countries or anywhere; artists, organizations, and free end users can be in poor countries or anywhere. And language can be no barrier, as explained below (online). Thanks to social networking, there is no upper limit to the number of downloads or other accesses that each donor can purchase and meaningfully use. For example, a donor could buy 10,000 prepaid free downloads without needing to know 10,000 people to give them to. That wouldn't work easily with 10,000 copies of a CD -- nor with a high-priced digital original. The proposed URLs will enable artists to donate digital work for mass distribution.

Donors can send recognition, personal, political, religious, advertising, or other messages with their free donations, if allowed (see below, online).

artists get paid for their work, and/or to use it to benefit a cause.

Note: The second half of this article was cut due to limited space. The full article is at http://www.aidsnews.org/2007/07/fundr-url.html

Footnote

1. The URLs might be in the form http://art.server.com/any-name-you-want where 'server.com' is a Web site that manages this fundraising service, 'art' is a fundraising project's account on that server to sell particular art or other content in a particular campaign, and 'any-name-you-want' is a name that a donor can choose or make up, as long as it is not already in use on that 'server' to sell that 'art'. 'Any-name-you-want' can usually be chosen to be easy to remember and use. But for other purposes (not discussed in this series of articles), it could instead be chosen to be hard to guess.

Financial Accounts That Can Reproduce, Inherit, and Evolve

By John S. James

The above fundraising ideas published with this article came from this writer's exploration of a powerful and apparently new proposal: that for the first time in human history, widespread online commerce makes possible financial accounts that could *reproduce* at their owner's request, creating "children" accounts and family trees through any number of generations.

Each new account will by default *inherit* any number of capabilities from its parent, such as: access to software applications and services; options and settings for these applications; overall look and feel; security restrictions; ability to accept many different kinds of bank cards and other payments; interactive business processes in many different human languages; art or other content for sale or distribution; automatic payments such as sales taxes, commissions, royalties, charitable contributions, etc.; automatic accounting and statistical projections that owners need not even request but can change if they want to; and much more.

As they reproduce and inherit, these accounts will *evolve* in grassroots community use, due to users' selections of accounts with the most useful "mutations" (inherited changes made by various owners of different

We designed this system to help independent

generations of ancestor accounts).

Note: Due to limited space we cut most of this article. The full text is at http://www.aidsnews.org/2007/07/fundr-reproduce.html

Major International AIDS Society Conference in Sydney, Australia, July 22-25

The Fourth IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention will take place July 22-25 in Sydney, Australia. Many studies will be released at or shortly before the conference; for example, see *The Lancet* issue of July 7, 2007:
http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/issue?volume=370&issue=9581
(free registration required for article access).

For those not going (including *AIDS Treatment News* -- it's a long, expensive trip for three and a half days of meetings at a 10-hour time change), Kaiser Family Foundation is providing official news coverage, and Clinical Care Options is providing official in-depth scientific coverage. Also check AIDS sites and publications, and general news reports. Some places to start:

• Kaiser: http://www.kaisernetwork.org/IAS2007 -- Check for news during the conference, or a little before or after. Many regular AIDS sites will have the headlines.

• CCO: http://www.clinicaloptions.com/HIV -- Check here for detailed coverage in the weeks after the conference (free registration required).

• Other sources: Besides the news you already read, a good place to start is http://news.google.com (search for HIV). This Google news-aggregation service includes stories from over 4,000 publications.

A focus of the meeting will be biomedical prevention; see
http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140673607610265/fulltext
(free registration required). Another focus will be the need for operations research to improve program effectiveness.

For more information, including details of the scientific program, see the official conference site, http://www.ias2007.org/

[Note: Another AIDS medical meeting, the 9th International Workshop on Adverse Drug Reactions and Lipodystrophy in HIV, will take place in Sydney just before the IAS conference, July 19-21. For more information see http://www.intmedpress.com/lipodystrophy/. After the conference, watch for reports in various AIDS publications and Web sites during the next several months.]

Is Cure Possible for HIV?

By David Scondras

Once again we are hearing about efforts to eradicate HIV, at least in some people. These efforts are being made, not by marginal actors, but by some of the country's top doctors, such as Anthony Fauci, longtime director of many HIV research efforts at the National Institutes of Health.

On May 24th the Bloomberg report (Bloomberg.com) headlined the issue this way: "Top U.S. Scientist to Use New AIDS Drugs Seeking Cure" [1].

For a summary of scientists' efforts exploring the possibility of eradication, see [2].

So what happened?

For many years scientists have understood that after HIV gets into someone's body, it starts infecting lots of T-helper cells. They are sometimes called CD4+ T cells.

T-helper cells are the cells that recognize that the body has been invaded by some enemy germ. If these kinds of cells are significantly reduced, the body is unable to recognize many illnesses, which start infecting a person with HIV. This is what we call having "AIDS".

The way HIV works begins with HIV inserting instructions into these T-helper cells on how to make more HIV. These instructions are known as 'provirus'. They are kind of the brain of HIV and it is these instructions that turn the cell into a factory that can make HIV.

The number of these factories is dramatically reduced soon after an HIV-positive person takes strong HIV medications. Unfortunately the medicines we have today do not eliminate all of the provirus. If you checked the cells of people with HIV who are taking antiviral medicines, you'd see that although HIV medications have eliminated most HIV from

their bloodstream, some cells with these instructions on how to manufacture HIV remain. It is still unclear why these cells containing instructions remain while most of the virus has been eliminated. The cells that have provirus but are not producing HIV are called 'latently infected'. They have the ability to spring into action at any time.

Scientists have at least two different theories that might explain why HIV in someone's body does not disappear altogether with the use of antivirals.

The first theory is that these latently infected cells can hang around for as long as twenty or thirty or forty years. As soon as someone stops taking antiviral medicines, these cells can spring into action and manufacture HIV.

The second theory is that the medicines we have been using until now do not shut off all HIV reproduction, just most of it -- and that is why when antivirals are stopped, the virus comes back.

The first theory makes us pessimistic about getting rid of HIV and curing someone infected with it.

We know that provirus does not make virus until the cell containing it is 'activated'. This means the cell is turned on by coming across footprints of a germ which cause the T cell to make proteins getting the immune system ready to fight the invader. When the T cell is manufacturing these proteins it also starts making HIV.

No one knows exactly *how* long it takes before all latently infected cells are activated.

For this reason, most scientists, doctors and activists have been very skeptical about finding a cure for HIV. Finding a cure would require getting rid of all cells that contain provirus. Unfortunately, the HIV medications we currently use do not get rid of these latently infected cells.

The second theory suggests that with more powerful drugs we might eliminate all HIV from the body.

New drugs which are in the pipeline are much more powerful than the one's we have right now. This leads us to a hopeful possibility. What if we could eliminate virtually all infected cells with the help of brand new HIV medications that are more powerful than ever before? What if the new drugs work so well that the immune system is able to get rid of the few infected cells that are left? This is the operating theory behind radiation treatments

for cancer.

How can we find out which theory is correct?

First we would use the powerful new HIV medications now available -- which perhaps can shut down all HIV replication completely and then see if the body clears HIV infection.

Then, after testing to make sure no virus or provirus can be found, we would then stop using the powerful drugs and see if the virus comes back.

Sounds interesting, doesn't it? This extraordinary experiment is actually taking place right now.

Why try this now?

First, because it has been discovered that in fact latently infected cells, containing provirus, do get eliminated from the body. It is not clear why or how, but the data shows that the body does in fact get rid of these latently infected cells (provirus).

Dr. Fauci at the National Institutes of Health, mentioned above, is conducting this study. His group found that in seven HIV-positive people who used strong antivirals within 4 months of being infected with HIV, there was a reduction in the amount of provirus by 50% every 4.6 months. If these results hold up, the scientists estimate that 7.7 years of the combination therapy could possibly eliminate HIV.

The second reason this study is being done now is because there are new powerful drugs such as entry inhibitors and others, which can be used to shut down viral replication, perhaps completely. Perhaps elimination of HIV would then happen faster, maybe in one year.

The experiment is underway. Patients will be dosed with the powerful new antivirals to hopefully shut down replication altogether for one year, and then they will be taken off the medication -- assuming no virus can be found -- to see if the virus comes back.

This is an experiment that needs to be done, and it's fine to hope for good results. But there are good reasons to think it will not work, and we should not raise our expectations too high. Perhaps it will work in a few unusual people -- those who are diagnosed with HIV soon after they were infected and go to the doctor and get HIV medication. Clearly we are far from understanding how this could work for the majority of people with HIV. Perhaps it will work for a limited period of time in some people, giving them a vacation from meds. Perhaps it will succeed completely and we can